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spud-bar (an iron implement shaped like a crow-bar, with a chisel-blade at one end, for digging) with one blow I cut its head squarely off. The body was taken back to camp. This was about 5 P.M.

About eight o'clock that evening, wishing to skin the snake, I placed the body upon my desk, noting as I did so that there was the slightest movement of the body. I took a scalpel, and holding the tail in one hand, started to cut off the rattles. The snake had no sooner been touched by the blade of the scalpel than it snatched its tail away, rattled viciously, and struck at my hand with its headless neck three times. I postponed the skinning until a later time.

The snake was a small one, being about eighteen inches in length, with five rattles. It was killed at an elevation of about 1,150 feet.

Some weeks later I found another of the same species stuck fast in a pool of the crude oil with which the Santa Fe track is sprinkled. Large numbers of small animals, especially mice, lose their lives in this manner. In places the track is nearly covered with the remnants of dead bodies.

HENRY W. MAYNARD

COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY,
KINGMAN, ARIZONA,
May 30, 1909

QUOTATIONS

A LONGEVITY TRUST

THE term "life insurance" never meant the insuring of lives until this year, when Dr. Burnside Foster and Professor Irving Fisher interested the life companies in their plans of preventing premature death. One company has this week announced its purpose to save one third of the amount awarded for death claims of tuberculous policy holders by a campaign of cure and prevention. The agents of the companies might easily be transformed into a militant body of health agents, armed with pamphlets and advice to each holder of the millions of policies. A staff of visiting physicians, specialists in the chief diseases, may treat patients in every community who

can not otherwise command skilled services. By such work the companies would have fewer death claims to pay. They could promise larger benefits. But this, which has hitherto been a deciding argument in insurance competition, is only incidental to the added promise that the policy holder's life, which is of quite inestimable value to his family, would be guarded.

The competition of the life companies, once started toward the prolongation of their patrons' lives, will not end until not only tuberculosis but all the diseases that figure largely in the actuarial tables become the subject of skilled attention. The lives of most men who can afford to employ a doctor are already "insured." Ultimately, we presume, those physicians not retained by the companies would be reduced to treating minor ills, or they would be forced quite out of their profession.

The organization of preventive medicine has reached startling proportions, but it has failed to keep pace with the progress in medical science. This progress is so rapid that the medical colleges complain that they can not catch up in their equipment. But if the new departure in life insurance means anything, it means that the companies are beginning to resolve themselves into what they have an inherent right to be, companies of physicians—a longevity trust.—*The New York Times*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

GAUDRY ON PYROTHERIUM¹

THE venerated author of "*Les Enchaînements du Monde Animal*" was engaged until within a few days of his death upon a series of monographs dealing with the fossil mammalian faunæ of Patagonia and based upon specimens collected for the Paris Museum by M. André Tournouër.

The first of these monographs² dealt with

¹ "Fossiles de Patagonie: le *Pyrotherium*," *Ann. de Paléontologie* (Boule), tome IV., 1909, pp. 1-28, pll. I.-VII.

² "Fossiles de Patagonie—Dentition de quelques Mammifères," *Mem. de la Soc. géol. de France, Paléontologie*, Mem. XXXI., 1906, 4° (42 text figures).